

woman and a bag, box or barrel; in detail information as to supplies, appliances and action; as to what was to be done, and what was not to be done, and what might have to be done, to make the middle passage a success and the ultimate result of the venture a profit—done in the daily feeding, watering, ventilating and cleansing with deluges of ocean brine, technically called “salting down” the writhing mass; in medicating the sick, in subduing the rebellious, in silencing the desperate and the crazed; in separating the dying from the dead, and in letting the dead loose from the jammed and crammed, and steaming, weltering, groaning, shrieking hell afloat. Here was indeed a plant of very slow growth. It must have been growing very many years before it had attained the proportions of 1787. Who would venture to estimate, even roughly, the number of vessels which, during this long succession of years, made the middle passage, and vomited their cargoes of naked barbarians, first into the ports of New England, and, afterwards, when it had “been found from experience” that slave labor would not be profitable there, into the ports of the South. And yet the slave trade being, during all that time, not only legal, but, in the opinion of the civilized world, perfectly legitimate commerce, not only the number but the ownership of those vessels can be ascertained with absolute accuracy from the records of British custom houses. Here is a broad and fertile field for statistical research. Might it not be well for you, gentlemen of the committee, who so fortunately have taken upon yourselves the duty which has been so long and so shamefully neglected at the South, of vindicating the truth of history, and especially when, in so doing, you will vindicate the character of your own State, and section, and people, and, above all, the character of their ancestry, of whom they have such good cause to be proud, and who are